



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|--|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 10/032,469 | 01/02/2002 | Jennifer Bryman | 05793.3054-00 | 5583 |
| 22852 7590 01/08/2007 FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER LLP 901 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20001-4413 | | | EXAMINER CHAMPAGNE, DONALD | |
| | | | ART UNIT 3622 | PAPER NUMBER |
| SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE | | MAIL DATE | DELIVERY MODE | |
| 3 MONTHS | | 01/08/2007 | PAPER | |

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/032,469

Applicant(s)

BRYMAN ET AL

Examiner

Donald L. Champagne

Art Unit

3622

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 April 2005.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 02 January 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The last line of claim 1, "send the partnership check [singular] to a set [plural] of **customer** [singular]", is indefinite.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-9, 12-16 and 18-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Schulze, Jr. (US005483049A).
6. Schulze, Jr. teaches (independent claims 1, 13, 18 and 22) a method and system for issuing/providing exchange *coupons 40* and redemption *checks 48*, either of which reads on "partnership checks"¹, the method comprising:

¹ From the definitions of a "partnership check" and a "value sharing relationship" in para. [0026] of the published application (US 20030126011A1).

Art Unit: 3622

analyzing a group of merchants based on a set of merchant qualification criteria (e.g., in a particular geographic region) to identify a merchant for associating with an *exchange coupon 40*/partnership check (col. 2 line 65 to col. 3 line 4 and col. 18 lines 34-39);

creating the *exchange coupon 40*/partnership check such that the *exchange coupon 40*/partnership check is redeemable with the identified merchant (col. 2 line 65 to col. 3 line 4 and col. 3 line 60 to col. 4 line 5); and

sending the created *exchange coupon 40*/partnership check to a customer (col. 18 lines 14-19).

For claim 13, forming a "value sharing relationship" with at least one *retailer* (merchant) is taught at col. 1 line 62 to col. 2 line 4). For claim 18, "generating a list of prospective merchants" is inherent; "generating/analyzing a list of prospective customers" is taught at col. 6 lines 58-67 and col. 3 line 1).

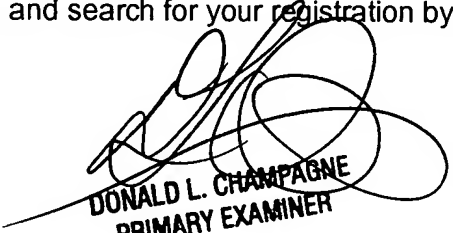
7. Schulze, Jr. also teaches at the citations given above claims 2, 5, 9, 12, 20 and 25.
8. Schulze, Jr. also teaches claims 3, 4, 23 and 24 (col. 18 lines 19-24 and 34-39); claim 6-8, 14-16, 21 and 26 (col. 2 lines 4-52); and claim 19 (*database 228*, col. 9 line 26-29).
9. Claims 10, 11 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schulze, Jr. (US005483049A). Schulze, Jr. does not teach inserts (claims 10 and 17) with the mailed coupon/check and an incentive chosen so as to maximize profit (claim 11). Official notice is taken (MPEP § 2144.03) that both of these limitations were in common use, and therefore obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the instant invention.

Conclusion

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Donald L Champagne whose telephone number is 571-272-6717. The examiner can normally be reached from 9:30 AM to 8 PM ET, Monday to Thursday. The examiner can also be contacted by e-mail at donald.champagne@uspto.gov, and *informal* fax communications (i.e., communications not to be made of record) may be sent directly to the examiner at 571-273-6717.
11. The examiner's supervisor, Eric Stamber can be reached on 571-272-6724. The fax phone number for all *formal* fax communications is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3622

12. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).
13. **ABANDONMENT** – If examiner cannot by telephone verify applicant's intent to continue prosecution, the application is subject to abandonment six months after mailing of the last Office action. The agent, attorney or applicant point of contact is responsible for assuring that the Office has their telephone number. Agents and attorneys may verify their registration information including telephone number at the Office's web site, www.uspto.gov. At the top of the home page, click on Site Index. Then click on Agent & Attorney Roster in the alphabetic list, and search for your registration by your name or number.



DONALD L. CHAMPAGNE
PRIMARY EXAMINER

Donald L. Champagne
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3622

30 December 2006